



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

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To: Local Newspapers

From: Catrina Weber, Health Educator

RE: Press Release, Sun Safety

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Summer Safety

With summer in full swing, people will be outside enjoying the blue skies and sunshine. However, too much heat on those summer days can be dangerous for our bodies. The number of people who have died from excessive heat in the United States between 1979 and 1999, is more than all the people who have perished in hurricanes, lightening, tornadoes, floods, and earthquakes combined. In fact, the CDC estimates that an average of 350 people dies each year from heat exposure.

Normally our body's built in cooling system, sweating, helps keep us cool. Sometimes our ability to cool ourselves gets overloaded. When this happens, we can develop heat exhaustion. Severe cases of overheating can cause heat stroke. Anyone can suffer from overheating. Those that are most susceptible are: the very young, the very old, and people that suffer from heart disease.

Heat exhaustion, a mild form of heat-related illness, can develop over several days of high temperatures and dehydration. Warning signs of heat exhaustion include:

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting

If you, or someone you know, is suffering from heat exhaustion, you should take the following steps:

- Drink cool, nonalcoholic beverages
- Rest
- Take a cool shower or bath
- Seek medical attention if symptoms worsen or last longer than an hour

Heat stroke is the most serious form of heat-related illness and occurs when our body becomes unable to control its temperature. In turn, our body temperature begins to increase rapidly and may rise to 106°F or more within minutes, resulting in death or permanent disability if not treated.

Warning signs of heat stroke include:

- High body temperature
- Red, hot, dry skin
- Rapid strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Unconsciousness

If you, or someone you know, is suffering from heat stroke, take the following steps:

- CALL FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IMMEDIATELY (911)
- Get the victim to a shady location
- Cool the victim in any way possible
- Continue to monitor the victim's temperature

While these heat-related illnesses can be extremely frightening, they are entirely preventable. Just remember the following tips while enjoying the warm weather:

- Drink plenty of cool fluids and don't wait until you feel thirsty
- Avoid fluids that contain caffeine, alcohol, or large amounts of sugar
- Stay in shady or air conditioned areas
- Take cool showers or baths
- Wear light-weight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing

- Limit outdoor activities to morning and evening
- Limit exercise
- Rest often
- Neighbors and family should check on elderly persons to make sure they are staying cool

For more information about this and other health topics, visit the Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov or our website www.cmdhd.org

This article has been brought to you by the Central Michigan District Health Department serving the residents of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon counties.

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